

Here begynneth a lytell treatyse  
named the bowge of courte.



Adv. B. 1

**I**n Antumpne whan the sonne is byrgne  
By radpante hete enryped hath our corne  
Whan luna full of mutabylte  
As Emperes the dyademe hath worne  
Of our pole artyke synplynge halfe is scoorne  
At our foly and our vnstedfastnesse  
The tyme whan Mars to werre hym dyde dies

I callynge to mynde the greate auctoryte  
Of poetes olde whyche full craftely  
Vnder as couerte termes as coude be  
Can touche a troughte and cloke it subtyll  
Wyth freshe vtteraunce full sentencypouly  
Dyuerse in style some spared not wyche to wyche  
Some of mortalyte nobly dyde endyte

Wherby I rede theyr renome and theyr fame  
Shal neuer dye but euermore endure  
I was sore moued to a force the same  
But Ignoraunce full soone dyde me dysture  
And shewed that in this arte was not sure  
For to Illumpne she sayde I was to duille  
Auplynge me my penne awaye to pulle

And not to wyche for he so wyll attayne  
Excedynge farther than his conynge is  
His hede maye be harde but feble is his bryayne  
Pet haue I knowen suche er this  
But of reproche surely he maye not mys

That clymmech hyer than he may forpyng haue  
What and he llyde downe who shall hym saue

Thus vp & down my mynde was drawen & cast  
That I ne wylte what to do was beste  
Soo sore enwred that I was at the laste  
Enfoiled to slepe and for to take some reste  
And to lye downe as soone as I my dresse  
At harwyche porte slumbryng as I laye  
In myne hostes house called powers kepe

We thoughte I sawe a shyppe goodly of sayle  
Come saylpyng forth in to that haven brood  
Her takelpyng ryche and of hie apparayle  
She kiste an anker and there she laye at rode  
Marchautes her boarded to see what she had lode  
There in they founde Royall marchaundise  
Fraghted with plesure of what ye conoe occupyse

But than I thoughte I wolde not dwell behynde  
Amonge all other I put my selfe in pece  
Than there coude I none aquentaunce fynde  
There was moche noyle anone one cryed cese  
Sharpely comaundpyng eche man holde hys pece  
Haplyers he sayde the shyp that ye here see  
The bowge of courte it hyghlye for certy net

The awnner therof is lady of estate  
Whoos name to tell is dame saunce pre



Here marchaundys is ryche and fortunate  
But who wyll haue it muste paye therfore derte  
This Royall chaffre that is shyppe here  
Is called fauore to stonde in her good grace  
Thay sholde ye see there pressynge in a pace

Of one and other that wolde this lady see  
Whiche sat behynde a trane of sylke fyne  
Of golde of tessel the fynest that myghte be  
In a trone whiche set clerer dyde shyne  
Thay Phebus in his spere celestyne  
Whoos beaute honoure goodly porte  
I haue to lypyll conynge to reporte

But of eche thyng there as I toke hede  
Amonge all other was wyrtten in her trone  
In golde letters this worde whiche I dyde rede  
Garder le fortune que est mauez et bone  
And as I stode redynge this verse my selfe allone  
Her chyef gentylwoman daunger by her name  
Gaue me ataunte and sayde I was to blame

To be so pette to prese so proudly vppe  
She sayde she trowed that I eten cause  
She asked yf euer I dranke of laucys cuppe  
And I thay softly answered to that clause  
That so to sape. I had gyuen her no cause  
Thay asked she me Syr so god the spede  
What is thy name and I sayde it was drede

A in

What mowyd the quod she hydder to come  
forloth quod I to bye some of your ware  
And with that worde on me she gaue a glome  
With browes bente and gay on me to stare  
full daynnoulsly and fro me she dyde fare  
Leuyng me stondynge as a maled may  
To whome there came an other gentyl woman

Delyre her name was and so she me tolde  
Sayenge to me broder be of good chere  
Abasshe you not but hardely be holde  
Auaunce your selfe to aproche and come nere  
What though our chaffer be neuer so dere  
Yet I auple you to speke for ony drede  
Who spareth to speke in fayth he spareth to spede

maystres quod I. I haue none aquentaunce  
That wyll for me be medpatoure and mene  
And this an other I haue but smale substaunce  
Peece quod Delyre ye speke not worth a bene  
Yf ye haue not in fayth I wyll you lene  
A precpous Jewell no rycher in this londe  
Bone auenture haue here now in your honde

Shyfte now therwith let see as ye can  
In bowge of courte cheuplaunce to make  
for I dare laye that there nys erthly man  
But an he can bone auenture take  
There can no fauour nor frendshyp hym forsake

4.  
✓  
None auenture may brynge you in luche case  
That ye shall stonde in fauoure and in grace

But of one thyng I werne you er I goo  
She that styreth the shyp make her your frende  
Maystres quod I. I praye you tell me why soo  
And how I maye that wape & meanes fynde  
forlothe quod she how euer blowe the wynde  
fortune gydeeth and ruleth all oure shyppe  
Whome she hateth shall ouer the see boorde skyp

Whome she loueth of all plesyre is ryche  
Whyles she laughed and hath luste for to playe  
Whome she hatche she casteeth in the dyche  
for whan she froñeth she thēketh to make a fray  
She cheryshed him and hym she casteeth a wape  
Alas quod I how myghte I haue her sure  
In farth quod she by none auenture

Thus in a rowe of martchauntes a grete route  
Surued to fortune that she wold be theyre frynde  
They thronge in fast and flocked her aboute  
And I with them prayed her to haue in mynde  
She promysed to vs all she wolde be kynde  
Of bowge of court she asketh what we wold haue  
And we asked fauoure / and fauour she vs gaue

¶ Thus endeth the prologue. And begynneth  
the bowge of Courte breuely compyled.

### **Diede**

**T**he sayle is vp fortune ruleth our helme  
We wante no wynde to passe now ouer all  
fauoure we haue toughter thay ony elme  
That wyll abyde and neuer frome vs fall  
But vnder hony ofte tyme lyeth bytter gall  
for as me thoughte in our thyppe I dyde see  
full subtyll persones in nombie foure and thre

The fyrste was fauell full of flattery  
Wyth fables false that well coude fayne a tale  
The seconde was Suspecte whiche that dayly  
Myldempte eche man with face deedly & pale  
And haruy halter that well coude picke a male  
With other foure of theyr affynyte  
Dylwayne. Ryotte. Dylsimuler. Subtylte.

fortune theyr frende w<sup>th</sup> whome oft she dyde daunce  
They coude not faile thei thought they were so sure  
And oftentimes I wolde my selfe anaunce  
With them to make solace and pleasure  
But my dysporte they coude not well endure  
They sayde they hated for to dele with Diede  
Thay fauell gay wyth fayre speche me to fede

### **Fauell.**

Noo thynge erthely that I wonder so sore  
As of your conynge that is so excellent  
Depnte to haue with vs luche one in store  
So vertuously that hath his dayes spence

5  
fortune to you gyftes of grace hath lente  
Loo what it is a man to haue connyng  
All erthly treſoure it is ſurmountynge

Ye be an apte man as ony can be founde  
To dwell with vs & ſerue my ladys grace  
Ye be to her ye a worth a thouſande pounde  
I herde her ſpeke of you within ſhorte ſpace  
Whan there were dyuerſe þ loze dyde you manace  
And though I ſay it I was my ſelfe your frende  
For here be dyuerſe to you that be vnkynde

But this one thyng ye maye be ſure of me  
For by that lord that bought dere all mankynde  
I can not flater I muſte be playne to the  
And ye nede ought may ſhewe to me your mynde  
For ye haue me whome faythfull ye ſhall fynde  
Whyles I haue ought by god thou ſhalt not lacke  
And yf nede be a bolde worde I dare crache

Nay naye be ſure whyles I am on your ſyde  
Ye maye not fall truſte me ye maye not fayle  
Ye ſonde in fauoure and fortune is your gyde  
And as ſhe wyll ſo ſhall our grete ſhypp ſayle  
Thyle lewde cok watti ſhall neuermore pieuaple  
Ageynſte you hardely therfore be not aſtrayde  
fare well tyll ſoone but no worde that I ſayde

**D**iede.

Thay thanked I hym for his grete gentylnes

But as me thoughte he ware on hym a cloke  
That lyned was with doubtfull doublenes  
He thoughte of wordes that he had full a poke  
His stomak stuffed offe tymes dyde reboke  
Suspycyon me thoughte mette hym at a brayde  
And J drewe nere to herke what they two sayde

In fayth qd suspecte spake drede no worde of me  
Why what chary wylte thou lete men to speke  
He sayth he can not well accorde with the  
Twyst qd suspecte goo playe hym J ne reke  
By cryste qd fauell drede is solepne freke  
What lete vs holde him vp may for a whyle  
Ye soo qd suspecte he maye vs bothe begyle

And whan he came walkynge soberly  
Wyth whomy/ and/ha/and with a croked loke  
He thoughte his hede was full of gelousy  
His eyen rollynge his bondes faste they quoke  
And to me warde the straye waye he toke  
God spede broder to me quod he chary  
And thus to talke with me he began

**C**Suspycyon

Ye remembre the gentylman ryghte nowe  
That comaunde w pou me thought a party spake  
Beware of him for J make god auowe  
He wyll begyle you and speke fayre to your face  
Ye neuer dwelte in suche any other place  
For here is none that dare well other truste

But I wolde telle you a thyng and I durste

Spake he a fayth no worde to you of me  
 I wote and he dyde ye wolde me telle  
 I haue a fauoure to you wherof it be  
 That I muste shewe you moche of my counselle  
 But I wonder what the deuyll of helle  
 He sayde of me whan he with you dyde talke  
 By myne auple dle not with him to walke

The soueraynst thyng that ony man maye haue  
 Is lyppl to save / and moche to here and see  
 For but I trusted you so god me laue  
 I wolde noo thyng so playne be  
 To you donly me thynke I durste shryue me  
 For now am I plenarely dyspoled  
 To shewe you thynges that may not be disclosed

¶ Drcd

Than I assured hym my fydelyte  
 His counseple secrete neuer to dyskure  
 Vt he coude fynde in herte to truste me  
 Els I prayed hym with all my bely cure  
 To kepe it hymselfe for than he myghte be sure  
 That noo way erthly coude hym bewrepe  
 Whyles of his mynde it were lockte with the kepe

By god quod he this and thus it is  
 And of his mynde he shewed me all and some.  
 fare well quod he we wpll talke more of this



Soo he departed there he wolde be come  
I dare not speke I prompted to be dome  
But as I stode musyng in my mynde  
Haruy haster came lepyng leghthe as lynde

Vpon his breste he bare a versyng bore  
His throte was clere and lustely coude fayne  
My thoughte his gowne was all furred wth fore  
And euer he lange/lythe I am no thyng playne  
To kepe him frome pykyng it was a grette payne  
He galed on me with his gotyshe berde  
Whan I loked on hym my purse was half aferde

**H**eruy haster.

Syr god you saue why loke ye so sadde  
What thyng is that I maye do for you  
A wonder thyng that ye waxe not madde  
For and I studye sholde as ye doo nowe  
My wytte wolde waste I make god auowe  
Tell me your mynde me thynke ye make a verse  
I coude it stay and ye wolde it reherse

But to the poynte shortly to procede  
Where hache your dwellyng be er ye cam here  
For as I trowe I haue lene you in dede  
Er this whan that ye made me Royall chere  
Holde vp the helme loke vp & lette god stee  
I wolde be mery what wynde that cuer blowe  
Heue & how rombelow row þ boote norman rowe

7  
Princes of poughte can ye synge by rote  
Or shall I sayle wth you a felashyp assaye  
For on the booke can not synge a note  
Wolde to god it wolde please you some daye  
A balade boke before me for to laye  
And lerne me to synge (Re my fa sol)  
And whan I sayle bobbe me on the noll

Loe what is to you a pleasure grete  
To haue that conynge & wayes that ye haue  
By goddis soule I wonder how ye gete  
Soo grete pleasyr or who to you it gaue  
Syr pardone me I am an homely knaue  
To be with you thus pette and thus bolde  
But ye be welcome to our housholde

And I dare saye there is no man here Inne  
But wolde be glad of your company  
I wyll neuer man that so soone coude wyne  
The fauoure that ye haue with my lady  
I praye to god that it maye neuer dy  
It is your fortune for to haue that grace  
As I be laued it is a wonder case

For as for me I serued here many a daye  
And yet vnneeth I can haue my luyng  
But I requyre you no worde that I saye  
For and I knowe ony erthly thyng  
That is agayne you ye shall haue wetyng

Bi

And ye be welcome syr so god me saue  
I hope here after a frende of you to haue

**Diede.**

Wyth that as he departed soo fro me  
Anone ther mette with him as me thoughte  
A man but wonderly belene was he  
He loked hawte he sette eche man at noughte  
His gawdy garment w<sup>th</sup> stourys was all wroughte  
With Indygnacyon lyned was his hode  
He frowned as he wolde swere by cockes blode

He bote the lyppe he loked passynge coye  
His face was belymmed as byes had hym stouge  
It was no tyme with him to Jape nor toye  
Ennye hath wasted his lyuer and his louge  
Hated by the herte so had hym wrounge  
That he loked pale as althes to my syghte  
Dysdayne I wene his comerous carbes hyghte

To herup halter than he spake of me  
And I drewe nere to harke what they two sayde  
Now quod Dysdayne as I shall laued be  
I haue grete scorne & amptyghce euill apayed  
Than quod Herup why arte thou so dysmayde  
By cryste quod he for it is shame to saye  
To see Johan dawes that came but pester daye

How he is now taken in concepte  
This doctour dawcocke Diede I wene he hyghte

By goddis bones but yf we haue som slepte  
It is lyke he wyl stonde in our lyghte  
By god quod herup & it so happen myghte  
Let vs therfore shortly at a worde  
Fynde some mene to caste him ouer the boorde

By him that me boughte thau qd Dysdayne  
I wonder sore he is in suche conceyte  
Turde qd halter I wyl the no thyng sayne  
There muste for hym be layde some prey bepte  
We twayne I trowe be not withoute dyscepte  
Fyrste pycke a quarell & fall oute with hym then  
And soo outface hym with a carde of ten

Forchwith he made on me a prowde assaute  
With scornfull loke meyd all in moode  
He wente aboute to take me in a sawte  
He froude he stared he stampped where he stode  
I loked on hym I wende he had be wode  
He set the arme proundly vnder the syde  
And in this wyle he gay with me to chyde

¶ Disdayne.

Remembrest thou what thou sayd yester nyght  
Wyle thou abyde by the wordes agayne  
By god I haue of the now grete dyspyte  
I shall the angre ones in euery dayne  
It is greate scorne to see suche an hayne  
As thou arte one that cam but yesterdape  
With vs olde seruautes suche maysters to playe

B ii

I tell the I am of countenaunce  
What weneste I were. I trowe þ knowe not me  
By goddis woundes but for dyspleaunce  
Of my querell soone wolde I binged be  
But no force I shall ones mete with the  
Come whan it wyl oppose the I shall  
What someuer auenture therof fall

Trowest thou dreupl I saye thou gawdy knane  
That I haue deynce to see the cheryshed thus  
By goddis syde my sworde thy berde shall shaue  
Well ones thou shalt be chermed I wus  
Naye strawe for tales thou shalt not rule vs  
We be thy betters and so thou shalt vs take  
Or we shall the oute of thy clothes shake

**Diede.**

Wpþ that came Rpotte rusthyng all at ones  
A rusty gallande to ragged and to rente  
And on the boorde he whyrled a payre of bones  
Quater trepe dewe he clattered as he wente  
Now haue at all by saynte Thomas of kente  
And euer he threwe & kyst I wote nere what  
His here was growen thorowe oute his hat

Thenne I behelde how he dysglysed was  
His hede was heuy for watchyng ouer nyghte  
His eyen bleered his face shone lyke a glas  
His gowne so shorte that it ne couer myghte  
His rumpe he wente so all for some lyghte

9  
His hole was garded wyth a lyfte of grene  
Yet at the knee they were broken J wene

His cote was checked with patches rede & blew  
Of kyrkeby kendall was his shorte demye  
And ay he lange in fayth decey thou crewe  
His elbowe bare he ware his gere so nye  
His nose a droppynge his lypes were full drye  
And by his syde his whynarde & his pouche  
The deuyl myghte daunce therin for ony crowche

Counter he coude (Dix) vpon a pottle  
An eeltryche fedder of a capons tayle  
He let vp freschely vpon his hat a losse  
What renell route quod he and gan to rayse  
How ofte he hadde hit Jemet on the tayle  
Of felype fetewse dnd lystell pretty case  
How ofte he knocked at her hylched gate

What sholde I tell more of his rebaudrye  
I was ashamed so to here hym prate  
He had no pleasure but in harlotrye  
Ay quod he in the deuylles date  
What arte thou I sawe the nowe but late  
Forlothe quod I in this courte I dwell nowe  
Welcome quod Rrote I make god auwe

¶ Rrote.

And syr in fayth why comste not vs amonge  
To make the mery as other felowes done



Thou muste sweere and stare may aldaye longe  
And wake all nyghte and slepe tyll it be none  
Thou mayste not studey or muse on the mone  
This worlde is no thyng but ete drynke & slepe  
And thus with vs good company to kepe

plucke vp thyne herte vpon a mery pyne  
And lete vs laugh a placke or cweyne at nale  
What the deuyll may myrthe was neuer one  
What loo may see here of dyce a bale  
A byrdelynge caste for that is in thy male  
Now haue at all that lyeth vpon the burde  
fre on this dyce they be not worth a turde

haue at the halarde or at the dosen browne  
Or els I pas a peny to a pounce  
Now wolde to god thou wolde leye money downe  
Lorde how that I wolde caste it full rounce  
Ay in my pouche a buckell I haue founde  
The armes of calyce I haue no coppe nor crosse  
I am not happy I renne ap on the losse

Now renne muste I to the stewys syde  
To wete yf malkeyn my leman haue gete oughte  
I lete her to hyre that men maye on her ryde  
Her harmes ealy ferre and nere is loughte  
By goddis sydes syns I her chyder broughte  
She hath gotte me more money with her sayle  
Thay hath some chyppe that in to bordows sayle



Had I as good an hois as she is a mare  
 I durste auenture to Journey thourough fraunce  
 Who rydeth on her he nedeth not to care  
 for she is trusted for to bieke a launce  
 It is a curtet that well can wyneche & prauce  
 To her wyll I nowe all my pouerte lege  
 And tyll I come haue here is myne hat to plege

### ¶ Drede

Gone is this knaue this rybaude foule & leude  
 he ran as fast as euer that he myghte  
 Inthyrftnes in hym may well be shewed  
 for home tyborne groneth both daye and nyghte  
 And as I stode and kylte asyde my syghte  
 Dylsayne I sawe with Dylspmulacyon  
 Standynge in sadde communicacion

But there was poyntyng & noddynge w<sup>th</sup> þe hede  
 And many wordes sayde in secrete wyse  
 They wandred ay and stode styll in no stede  
 He thoughte alwaye Dylspmular dyde deuple  
 He passynge soie myne herte than gan aryle  
 I dempte & drede theyr talkynge was not good  
 Anone dylspmular came where I stode

Thay in his hode I sawe there faces tweyne  
 That one was lene & lyke a pyned goost  
 That ocher loked as he wolde me haue slayne  
 And to mewarde as he gan for to roost  
 Whay that he was euen at me almoost

I sawe a knyfe hyd in his one sleue  
Wherof was wyrtten this worde myschene

And in his other sleue me thought I sawe  
A sponne of golde full of hony swete  
To fede a fole and for to preye a dawne  
And on that sleue these wordes were wrete  
A falsse abstracte cometh from a fals concrete  
His hode was syde his cope was roset grape  
Thysle were the wordes he to me dyde save

**(Dysimulation)**

How do ye mayster ye loke so soberly  
As I be laued at the dredefull dape  
It is a perylous vyce this enuy  
Alas a connyng man ne dwelle maye  
In no place well but foles with fraye  
But as for that connyng hath no foo  
Saue hym that nought can / scrypture sayth soo.

I knowe your vertu and your lytterature  
By that lytel connyng that I haue  
Ye be malpnyed sore I you ensure  
But ye haue crafte your selfe alwaye to saue  
It is grete scorne to se a mysproude knaue  
With a clerke that connyng is to prate  
Lette them go lowse them in the decyptes date

for all be it that this longe not to me  
Yet on my backe I bere suche lewde delynge

11  
Ryghte now I spake with one I trowe I see  
But what a strawe I maye not tell all thyng  
By god I saye there is grete herte biennynge  
Betwene the persone ye wote of Jou  
Alas I coude not dele so with a yew

I wolde eche man were as playne as I  
It is a worlde I saye te here of some  
I hate this faynyngge fye vpon it fye  
A man can not wote where to become  
I wys I coude tell but humilery home  
I dare not speke we be so layde awayte  
For all our courte is full of dyscepte

Now by saynte fraũceys that holy man & frere  
I hate this wayes agayne you that they take  
Were I as you I wolde ryde them full nere  
And by my trowche but yf an ende they make  
Yet wyll I saye some wordes for your sake  
That shall them angre I holde there on a grote  
For some shall wene be hanged by the throte

I haue a stoppyngge oyster in my poke  
Truste me and yf it come to a nede  
But I am lothe for to reple a smokke  
Yf ye coude be othewyse agrede  
And so I wolde it were so god me spede  
For this maye brede to a confusyon  
Withoute god make a good conclusyon

Maye see where yonder stondeth the teder man  
A flatteryng knaue & false he is god wote  
The dysuppl stondeth to herken and he can  
It were more thyfft he boughte him a newe cote  
It wyl not be / his purse is not on fote  
All that he wereth it is borrowed ware  
His wyffe is thynne his hode is threde bare

How coude I saye but what this is ynowe  
A dowe tyll soone we shall speke more of this  
Ye muste be ruled as I shall tell you howe  
Amendis maye be of that is now a mps  
And I am your syr so haue I blys  
In euery poynte that I can do or saye  
Gyue me your honde fare well & haue good daye

**C Dredde**

Sodaynly as he departed me fro  
Came pressyng in one in a wonder aray  
Et I was ware behynde me he sayde bo  
Thenne I astonyed of that lodeyne fraye  
Sterte all at ones I lyked no thyng his playe  
For yf I had not quykely fledde the touche  
He had plucked oute the nobles of my pouche

He was trussed in a garmente strapte  
I haue not sene suche any others page  
For he coude well vpon a casket wayte  
His hode all pouned and garded lyke a cage  
Lyghte lyme fyrger he toke none other wage

Harken quod he loo here myne honde in thynne  
To vs welcome thou arte by laynte Dypntyne

**C**Discepte.

But by that lord that is one two and thre  
I haue an errande to rounde in your ere  
He tolde me so by god ye maye truste me  
Parte remembre whan ye were there  
There I wpyked on you / wote ye not where  
In A loco I mene iuxta **(B)**  
Woo is hym that is blynde and maye not see

But to here the subtylte and the crafte  
As I shall tell you yf ye wyll harke agayne  
And whan I sawe the horlons wolde you haste  
To holde myne honde by god I had grete payne  
For forthwyth there I had him slayne  
But that I orde mordre wolde come oute  
Who delech w shrewes hath nede to loke aboute

**C**Diede.

And as he roynded thus in myne ere  
Of false collusyon confetryd by assente  
We thoughte I see lewde felawes here and there  
Came for to slee me of mortall entente  
And as they came the shypborde false I hente  
And thoughte to iefe / and euen with that wote  
Laughte penne and ynke & wroth this lpyll boke

I wolde therwith no man were myscontente  
Beslechynge you that shall it see or rede

In euery poynte to be indyfferente  
Synth all in substaunce of slubrynge doth procede  
I wpll not saye it is mater in dede  
But yet of tyme suche dremes be founde trewe  
Now conskrewde ye what is the resydewe

¶ Thus endeth the Bowge of couite.  
Enprynted at westmynster By me  
Wynklyn the worde.

